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Graham, Dougal

The witty...king's fool

Glasgow

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TIGHTLY

BOUND

THE

WITTY AND ENTERTAINING EXPLOITS

OF

GEORGE BUCHANAN,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE KING'S FOOL.

GLASGOW:
PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

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THE

WITTY EXPLOITS

OF

MR. GEORGE BUCHANAN.

PART I.

Mr. George Buchanan was a Scotsman born, and though of mean parentage, made great progress in learning. As for his understanding and ready wit, he excelled all men then alive in the age, that ever proposed questions to him. He was servant or teacher to King James the VI., and one of his private counsellors; but publicly acted as his fool.

1. It happened one day that a young airy nobleman went into the king's garden to pull a flower for a young lady he fancied: George followed at a distance, so when the young man found a flower he fancied, he would not pull it himself, but to find it again without farther search, he covered it with his hat, and went away for his sweetheart. No sooner was he gone, but up goes George, lifts his hat, and pulls the flower, then eases himself on the spot, covers it with the hat again, and away he goes. Soon after, the young gentleman returned, leading his sweetheart to pull the flower below the hat; but as soon as he lifted the hat, and saw what was below it, he looked like a fool; and the lady flying in a passion, sets off, and would never countenance

him any more. The young gentleman being sadly vexed at this affront given to him by George, sent him a challenge to fight him, appointing day and place where they were to meet. Being to fight on horseback, George gets an old stiff horse, and for harnessing, covers him about with blown bladders, with small stones in each, without either sword or spear; and away to the field he goes, where the duel was appointed. So when George saw his enemy coming against him, all in glittering armour, armed with sword and spear, he made up to him with all the speed his horse could carry him; when the small stones in the bladders made such a rattling noise, that the gentleman's fine gelding would not stand the battle, but ran away, and threw his master to the ground; which caused all the spectators to laugh, and say the gentleman was more fool than George. The gentleman being still more enraged at this second affront, he would fight with George on foot; but his friends persuaded him that it would be no honour for him to fight and kill the king's fool; and far less to be killed by the fool. So they were advised both to agree. But the gentleman would try another exploit with George, for to have it said he was still the cleverest man, viz:—To hold him a jumping-bout publicly, the next day thereafter. With all my heart, says George, and we will end in about where we began, they not knowing his meaning in this. The place and hour being set, where they were to meet next morning. George in the night time caused a deep pit to be made, and the earth of it carried away; then filled it up with dung from a p——, and covered it over with a green turf, that it might not be known by the other ground. So, according to promise, they both met in the morning against the appointed time. Now, George being the oldest man, and by them counted the

greatest fool, the young spark permitted him to jump first, which he according to order did, and jumped within a foot of the place where the ground was falsified. The young man seeing this, made his performance with great airs, and all his might, so that he jumped a foot over George, but up to the oxters in clean dung! whereat the whole multitude of spectators cried out with huzzas and laughter. Now, says George, I told you we would end in and about where we began, and that is in clean dirt.

2. On a time after this, the king and his court were going into the country, and they would have George to ride before them in the fool's dress; whereunto he seemed unwilling, but it was the king's pleasure. So George was mounted upon an old horse, with a pair of old riven boots, the heels hanging down, and a palmer coat, patched over with pictures of divers kinds. George rode before them in this posture, which caused great laughter and diversion, until they came to an inn, where they alighted to dine, and in the time they were at dinner George went into the stables, and with a knife cut all their horses' chafts, not sore, but so as they might bleed. Now, as soon as dinner was over, and they mounted on their horses again, George riding before them as usual, in his palmer coat and old boots, they began to make their game of him. Then George turning about suddenly, and clapping his hands with a loud laughter, the king asked him what made him laugh so. Laugh, says George, how can I but laugh, when horses cannot hold their peace? O my sovereign, says he, don't you see how your horses have rent their chafts laughing at my old boots! Then every man looking at his horse's mouth, they were all in a rage against George. The king, causing George to dismount directly, and charged him never to let

him see his face on English ground. Now George knowing that nothing could reconcile the king at this time, he came away to Scotland, and caused them to make a pair of great boots, and put a quantity of Scottish earth in each of them, and away he goes for London, to see the king once more. He hearing the king and his court were to pass through a town, George places himself up in an old window, and sets up his bare a—, to the king and his court as they passed. The king being greatly amazed to see such an unusual honour done to him was curious to know the performer; so he called unto him, desiring him to come down; and finding it to be George—Sir, says the king, did not I charge you never to let me see your face again? True, my sovereign, says George, for which cause I let you see my a—. But says the king, you was never to come on English ground again. Neither I did, says George, pulling off his boots before the King, behold, my Sovereign, it is all Scots earth I stand upon. The king and his court being greatly diverted with this merry joke, George was admitted again to the king's favour.

3. After this there arose a debate betwixt the king and the queen about votes in the parliament; as the king had two votes, the queen would have one, and would needs be a parliamenter, or no peace without preferment. This matter was committed to George by the king; so it was agreed among the parliamenters, that the queen should be admitted into parliament for a day. Accordingly she came, and was received with all the honour and congratulation that was due and becoming her high station; but before any matter of consequence was brought to the board, George seated himself hard by the queen's seat; all being silent, he rose up very quickly, lifted one of his

legs, let a loud f——t, which set the whole house a-laughing; whereat the queen was greatly offended, and said, go, take the rogue and hang him, to which George answered, a fine parliamenter, indeed, to hang a man for a sinless infirmity, and that's a f——t. The queen being enraged at the affront put on her first appearance in parliament, went off in a passion, and never would countenance them more. But yet, to be revenged on George, she would never give the king rest till he delivered George into her hands, that he might be punished at her pleasure; which the king accordingly commanded to be done, knowing that George would rescue himself by some intrigue or other. No sooner was he delivered into her hands, but she and her maids of honour pronounced his doom, which was as follows:—As he had affronted the queen among so great an equipage, who ought to be honoured in chief above all women in the nation, that he should be stoned to death by the hands of women. Now the time being come that he had to die, according to their appointment, he was taken into a park, where a great number of women were waiting for him, with their aprons full of stones, to fall upon him, and put him to death, according to the queen's appointment.

GEORGE'S SPEECH TO HIS EXECUTIONERS.

Here's a female band with bags of stones,
To kill a man for rumple groans.
I'm clean of rapine, blood, and thefts,
Could I convert my f——s to rifts?
Since I, the first for f——s do die,
Close up the place from whence they fly,
To commit my crime, I think ye'll scarce,
If once you do cork up your a—.
And now since women stones do carry,
Men need not in the world longer tarry,

Judge if such women be chaste complete,
With forty stones between their f——;
But since 'tis so ye will come on,
The greatest w—— throw the first stone.

When he had ended with these words, "The greatest w—— throw the first stone," every one put it to another to cast the first stone, but knowing they would attain the character of a w—— for so doing, they all refused till the dying hour was past, and then he took a protest against them, and by that means he gained his life. After this he was admitted into the queen's favour and presence, and attended the court as formerly.

4. About this time, the French king, in order to pick a quarrel with the court of Britain, sent a letter to the king, desiring it to be read before the parliament: and the writing was as follows: "Will I come? Will I come? Will I come?!"—This letter being read before the king and his courtiers, they all concluded that the French king designed to invade England; therefore they ordered an answer to be wrote, upbraiding him with the breach of peace, and putting him in mind of the last treaty. The answer being read before the king and his nobles, they all agreed that it should be sent off. But George, smiling, and shaking his head, cried out,

Many men, many minds,
Who knows what he designs?

Then they asked George what the French king meant by such a letter? to which he answered, I suppose he wants an invitation to come over and dine with you, and then return in a friendly manner; but you are going to charge him with a breach of peace, before he has given any signal of offence or war; his letter is indeed dark and mystical, but send him an answer according to his question

Now, George being ordered to write the answer, it was as follows:—"And ye come—And ye come—And ye come." This being sent to the French king, he admired it beyond expression, saying, it was an answer more valiant and daring than he expected. So the enmity he intended was extinguished, and turned into love.

5. It happened once that a malignant party in Scotland sent up a great spokesman to the king and parliament, for the reducing of the church; George hearing of his coming, went away and met him on the bridge, and the salutation that he gave him was the cutting off his head, and throwing it over the bridge! He then ran to the king with all his might, and fell down before him, pleading most heartily for a pardon, or without it he was a dead man. The king most seriously asked him what he had done now? To which he answered, he had only thrown the Scots Bishop's hat over the bridge, which made the king to laugh, to hear him ask pardon for such a small fault; but he had no sooner got the pardon sealed by the king's hand, than he said, indeed my sovereign, I threw his hat over the bridge, but his head was in it. O Geordie, Geordie, says the king, thou wilt never give over till thou be hanged.

6. A nobleman in England agreed with the king how to put a trick upon George, to try his manly courage, in sending him to a certain place for a bag of money. On his way home, through St. James' park, they caused a sturdy fellow to go and set upon him by the way, and take the money from him. The fellow being armed with sword and pistol, came up quickly and attacked George with these words, You, sir, deliver what money you have, or you are a dead man. To which George answered, sir, I have some indeed, but 'tis not my own, and therefore do not like to part

with it: nevertheless, since being determined as you are, to exchange blows for it, pray do me the favour to fire your pistol through the flap of my cloak, that the owners may see I have been in great danger of my life before I parted with it, which he accordingly did. No sooner had he fired the pistol, than George whipt out his hanger from below his cloak and with one stroke cut off his right hand wherein he held his sword, so that both his sword and the hand fell to the ground; but George lifted his hand and carried it to the king. No sooner did he come before them, but they asked him, saying, well, George, did you see any body to trouble you by the way? None, said he, but one fellow, who was going to take the money from me, but I made him give me his hand he would not do the like again. You did? says the fellow's master. Yes, I did, says George; let work bear witness, throwing down the fellow's hand on the table before them all.

7. Now, this last exploit of George's caused many of the English to hate him; and, among the rest, a young nobleman fell a joking of George, saying, he would be as famous a champion for Scotland as Sir William Wallace was. Ay, ay, says George, Wallace was a brave man in his time. True, indeed, says the young nobleman, but when he came to London, we did him all manner of justice, and for honour of the Scots, we have his effigy in the s——— to this very day. And do you know the reason of that, says George? No, I don't, says he. Well, I'll tell you, says George: he was such a terror to Englishmen when he was alive, that the sight of his picture yet makes them p—— themselves. The English took this answer as a great affront, and forthwith caused Wallace's picture to be taken out of all their s———.

8. A young English girl falling in love with a Scotchman, she petitioned him several times for to marry her; which he refused. So, to be revenged on him, she went to a Justice, and swore a rape against him, which is death by the law. George hearing of this, went to the prison where the young man was, and instructed him how to behave before the judge. So in the time of the trial, George came in while the judge was crying to the man, but never a word he could get him to answer, to tell whether he was guilty or not. After the justice had given him over for deaf and dumb, others fell a shouting in his ears, but never a word he would speak. Then the judge, perceiving George, called him, saying, George, do you know what is the matter with this man? Yes, I do very well, says George. What is it? says the judge. Why, says George, the woman made such a noise and crying when he was ravishing her, it has put the poor man quite deaf, I assure you. Is it so? says the justice. No, no, says the woman, my Lord Justice, you may believe me, I lay as mute as a lamb, and never spoke a word all the time. Very well confessed, said the justice, and you have sworn a rape upon him. Take the w——— to prison, and let the poor man go about his business, and so it ended.

PART II.

GEORGE happened one time to be in company with a bishop, and so they fell to dispute anent education, and he blanked the bishop remarkably, and the bishop himself owned he was worsted.—Then one of the company addressed himself to him in these words: thou Scot, said he, should not have left thy country. For what? says he, because thou

has carried all the wisdom that is in it thither with thee. No, no, says he, the shepherds in Scotland will dispute with any bishop in London, and exceed them very far in education. The bishops then took this as an affront, and several noblemen affirmed it to be as the Scot had said: bets were laid on each side, and three of the bishops were chosen, and sent away to Scotland to dispute it with the shepherds, accompanied with several others, who were to bear witness of what they should hear pass between them. Now, George knowing which way they went, immediately took another road and was in Scotland before them. He then made an acquaintance with a shepherd on the border whose pasture lay on the wayside where the bishops were to pass; and there he mounted himself in shepherd's dress; and when he saw the bishops appear, he conveyed his flock to the roadside, and fell a chanting at a Latin ballad. When the bishops came up to George, one of them asked him in French what o'clock it was? To which he answered in Hebrew, it is directly about the time of the day it was yesterday at this time. Another asked him in Greek, what countryman he was? To which he answered in Flemish, if ye knew that, you would be as wise as myself. A third asked him, in Dutch, where was you educated? To which he answered, in Earse, herding my sheep between this and Lochaber. This they desired him to explain into English, which he immediately did. Now, said they one to another, we need not proceed any farther. What, says George, are you butchers? I'll sell you a few sheep. To this they made no answer, but went away shamefully, and said, they believed the Scots had been through all the nations in the world for their education, or the devil had taught them. Now, when George had ended this

dispute with the bishops, he stripped off his shepherd's dress, and up through England he goes, with all the haste imaginable, so that he arrived at the place from whence they set out, three days before the judges, and went every day asking if they were come, so that he might not be suspected. As soon as they arrived, all that were concerned in the dispute, and many more, came crowding in, to hear what news from the Scottish shepherds, and to know what was done. No sooner had the three gentlemen declared what had passed between the bishops and the shepherds, whom they found on the Scots border, but the old bishop made answer, and think you, said he, that a shepherd could answer these questions? It has been none else but the devil; for the Scots ministers themselves could not do it; they are but ignorant of such matters, a parcel of beardless boys. Then George thought it was time to take speech in hand. Well, my lord bishop, says George, you call them a parcel of ignorant beardless boys. You have a great long beard yourself, my lord bishop, and if grace were measured by beards, you bishops and the goats would have it all, and that will be quite averse to Scripture. What, says the bishop, are you a Scot? Yes, says George, I am a Scot. Well, says the bishop, and what is the difference between a Scot and a sot? Nothing at present, says George, but the breadth of the table, there being a table betwixt the bishop and George. So the bishop went off in a high passion, while the whole multitude were like to split their jaws with laughter.

2. About this time there was an act of parliament for the benefit of murderers, that any person, who committed murder, if they forfeited five hundred marks, which went under the name of Kin-boot, because, so much of this went to the murdered person's nearest relations, as the price of

blood, the murderer got a remit. Now George knowing this to be contrary to Moses' laws, was very much grieved to see so many pardons sealed by the king's hand for murder, almost one every week; it being so usual for the king to subscribe them, that he would not read them, nor enquire what they were; for which cause, George writes a writ to the crown, and sent it to the king to be subscribed, which he actually did, and never looked what it was, returned it to George. No sooner had he received it, but he goes to the king and told him it was not time for him to be sitting there, whereat the king, greatly amazed, started up; then George in great haste, sets himself down in the king's chair, forthwith declaring himself king, saying, you who was king must be my fool, for I am now the wisest man. The king at this was greatly offended, until George showed him his seal and superscription. But from that day forth, the king knew what he subscribed.

3. The next pardon that came to be sealed by the king, was a gentleman who had killed two men before, and had got pardons for them by money. This being the third, the king was very silent in looking over the petition: George standing by, asked the king what he was going to seal now. To which he answered, it is a remit for a man who has killed three men at sundry times, I gave him two remits before. Oh, says George, he has killed but one man. And who killed the other two, says the king. You did, says George, for if you had given him justice when he had killed the first, he had killed no more. When the king heard these words he threw down the pen, and declared that such an act to save a murderer, should be null ever after by him.

4. One day, George having no money, he goes away and gets a pick and a spade, and then falls a

digging at a corner of the king's palace; which the king perceiving from his window, calls what he was wanting there? Are you going to undermine my house, and make it fall? No, my sovereign, says George, but it is verily reported that there is plenty of money about this house, and where can it be? says George, I cannot find it, for it is not within the house to do me service, then surely it must be below it. O George! says the king, that is a crave after the new fashion, what money you want I'll order for you. Then, my sovereign, says George, I'll dig no more.

5. One time George being in the country, he came to an inn, where he alighted to refresh himself and his horse. The innkeeper charged him double price for every thing he called for.—George never grumbled at this, but gave him all demands, and away he goes on his journey. At the inn where he quartered the following night he was used after the same manner, if not worse. Having little farther to go, he returned next day, and came that night to the inn where he refreshed himself the day before. So, when he alighted, the boy asked him what he would give his horse? What you will, said he. When he had gone to his room, the waiter enquired what he would have to drink? What you will, says he. The master of the inn came into his room before supper, and enquired what he would have for supper? What you will landlord, says he. After supper, and a hearty bowl to put all over, he went to bed. On the morrow he rose very early, and called for the boy to make ready his horse in all haste, for he was designed to mount and go directly. Soon after, he went into the stable where the boy was, calling for his horse, when he mounted with all the speed he could, and gave the boy a piece of money, saying, here my boy, this is for taking

care of my horse; I have paid for all I have ordered in the house, and off he goes. About mid day he alighted again at an inn to refresh himself and his horse, and there he chanced to be in company with his other landlord where he was the night before, and charged him with the double reckoning: so he addressed himself to him in the following manner.—Sir, says he, I do believe I was in your house yesternight; O yes, Sir, says he, I mind of you pretty well. And where was you last night? Last night, says George, I was in one of the finest inns, and the civilest landlord I ever had in my life: they brought all things that I stood in need of unto me, without calling for them; and when I came off this morning, they charged me nothing, and I paid nothing but sixpence to the boy for dressing my horse. Blood and wounds! said the old fellow, then I'll go there this night. Ay, says George, do; and mind this, when they ask you what you will have for yourself and your horse, answer nothing but What you will, Sir. George smiling within himself, to think how he had got the one extortioner to take amends of the other. So this innkeeper set off on his journey, and rode so late that night that he might reach the cheap inn, that most of the people were gone to bed before he arrived. As soon as he dismounted from his horse, the boy enquired at him, What shall I give your horse, master? To which he answered, What you will, boy. The boy hearing this, runs away, (leaving him and his horse to stand at the door), up stairs to his master's room, crying, master, master, What-you-will is come again;—O the rogue, cries he, where is he?—I'll cane him—I'll what you will him by and by. Then to him he runs with his cane, licks, and kicks him until he was scarce able to mount his horse, and would give him no entertainment there,

which caused him to ride the whole of a cold winter night, after he had got his bones all beat and bruised. So the one pursued the other as a murderer; and his defence was, that he was a cheat and a scorner of his house, until the truth was found out.

6. About this time the French king sent and demanded from the king of England, three men of different qualities. The first was to be a mighty strong man; the second a very wise man; and the third a very great fool; so that he might have none in all France to match them. So, accordingly, there were two men chosen; the one a strong man, and the other a very wise man, but George was to act as the fool; nevertheless, he was the teacher of the other two. On their way to France George asked the strong man, what will you answer the French king when he asks if you be a strong man? Why, says he, I'll say I am. Then, says George, he'll possibly get a stronger man than you, who will kill you, and affront your country. What shall I say then, said the strong man. Why, says George, tell him you are strong enough untried. Then said he to the wise man, and what will you say to the king, when he asks if you are a wise man? Why, I'll tell him I am, and answer him all the questions I know. Very well, says George, but what if he asks you what you do not know, then you'll affront your country, and be looked upon as a greater fool than me. Well, and what shall I answer, then? said the wise man. Why, says George, tell him he is only a wise man that can take care of himself; and I shall come in after you, and take care of you altogether. As soon as they arrived at the king of France's palace, the king sent for them to try them. The strong man was first called for, and in he went; then the king asked him if he was a

strong man? to which he answered, O king! I am strong enough untried. Very well, said the king. After him the wise man was called; and the king asked him if he was a wise man? to which he answered, he is only a wise man who can take care of himself. Very well, says the king. On which George pushed up the door, and in he went, with loud laughter, and p—— directly in his Majesty's face, which blinded both his eyes, and put the whole court in amaze. Now, now, said his Majesty, it is true enough what the wise man says, for if I had taken care of myself, I need not have been p—— upon by the English fool. O ho, says George, fools always strive to make fools of others, but wise men make fools of themselves. By this his Majesty seemed to think he was made the greatest fool, and charged them to go home, for he wanted no more of England's strength, wisdom, or folly.

7. One night a Highland drover chanced to have a drinking-bout with an English captain of a ship, and at last they came to be very hearty over their cups, so that they called in their servants to have a share of their liquor. The drover's servant looked like a wild man, going without breeches, stockings, or shoes, not so much as a bonnet on his head, with a long peeled rung in his hand. The captain asked the drover how long it was since he catched him? He answered it is about two years since I hauled him out of the sea with a net, and afterwards ran into the mountains, where I catched him with a pack of hounds. The captain believed it was so; but, says he, I have a servant the best swimmer in the world. O, but, says the drover, my servant will swim him to death. No, he will not, says the captain, I'll lay one hundred crowns on it. Then, says the drover, I'll lay it one to one, and staked directly, the day being

appointed when trial was to be made. Now the drover, when he came to himself, thinking on what a bargain he had made, did not know what to do, knowing very well that his servant could swim none. He hearing of George being in town, who was always a good friend to Scotchmen, he went unto him and told him the whole story, and that he would be entirely broke, and durst never return home to his own country, for he was sure to lose it. Then George called the drover and his man aside, and instructed them how to behave, so that they should be safe and gain too. So accordingly they met at the place appointed. The captain's man stript directly and threw himself into the sea, taking a turn until the Highlandman was ready, for the drover took some time to put his servant in order. After he was stripped, his master took his plaid, and rolled a kebbuck of cheese, a big loaf, and a bottle of gin in it, and this he bound on his shoulders, giving him directions to tell his wife and children that he was well, and to be sure he returned with an answer against that day se'nnight. As he went into the sea, he looked back to his master, and called out to him for his claymore. And what waits he for now? says the captain's servant. He wants his sword, says his master. His sword, says the fellow; what is he to do with a sword? Why, says his master, if he meets a whale or a monstrous beast, it is to defend his life. I know he will have to fight his way through the north seas, ere he get to Lochaber. Then cried the captain's servant, I'll swim none with him, if he takes his sword. Ay, but says his master, you shall, or lose the wager; take you another sword with you. No, says the fellow, I never did swim with a sword, nor any man else, that ever I saw or heard of; I know not but that wild man will kill me in deep water. I would

not for the whole world, venture myself with him and a sword. The captain seeing his servant afraid to venture, or if he did, he would never see him again alive, therefore he desired an agreement with the drover, who at first seemed unwilling; but the captain putting it in his will, the drover quit him for half the sum. This he came to through George's advice.

8. George was one day met by three bishops, who paid him the following compliments: says the first, good-morrow, Father Abraham; says the second, good-morrow, Father Isaac; says the third, good-morrow, Father Jacob. To which he replied, I am neither Father Abraham, Father Isaac, nor Father Jacob; but I am Saul, the son of Kish, sent out to seek my father's asses, and, lo! I have found three of them. Which answer fully convinced the bishops that they had mistaken their man.

9. A poor Scotchman dined one day at a public house in London upon eggs, and not having money to pay, got credit till he should return. The man being lucky in trade, acquired vast riches; and after some years happening to pass that way, calls at the house where he was owing the dinner of eggs. Having called for the innkeeper, he asked him what he had to pay for the dinner of eggs he got from him such a time? The landlord seeing him now rich, gave him a bill of several pounds, telling him as his reason for so extravagant a charge, that these eggs, had they been hatched, would have been chickens; and these, laying more eggs, would have been more chickens; and so on, multiplying the eggs and their product till such time as their value amounted to the sum charged. The man refusing to comply with this demand, was charged before a judge. He then made his case known to George, his countryman, who promised

to appear in the hour of cause, which he accordingly did, all in a sweat, with a great basket of boiled pease, which appearance surprised the judge, who asked him what he meant by these boiled peas? Says George, I am going to sow them. When will they grow? said the judge. They will grow, said George, when sodden eggs grow chickens, which answer convinced the judge of the extravagance of the innkeeper's demand, and the Scotsman was acquitted for twopence halfpenny.

George, one day easing himself at the corner of a hedge, was espied by an English squire who began to mock him, asking him why he did not keckle like the hens? But George, whose wit was always ready, told him he was afraid to keckle, lest he would come and snatch up the egg, which rebuff made the squire walk off as mute as a fish.

George was professor of the College of St. Andrews, and slipt out one day in his gown and slippers, and went on his travels through Italy, and several other foreign countries and after seven years returned with the same dress he went off in; and entering the college, took possession of his seat there; but the professor in his room quarrelled him for so doing. Ay, says George, it is a very odd thing that a man cannot take a walk out in his slippers, but another will take up his seat. And so set the other professor about his business.

Two drunken fellows one day fell a beating one another on the streets of London, which caused a great crowd of people to throng together to see what it was. A tailor being at work up in a garret, about three or four stories high, and he hearing the noise in the street, looking over the window, but could not well see them; he began to stretch himself, making a long neck, until he fell down out of the window, and alighted on an old man who was walking on the street; the poor tailor

was more afraid than hurt, but the man he fell on died directly. His son caused the tailor to be apprehended, and tried for the murder of his father; the jury could not bring it in wilful murder, neither could they altogether free the tailor; the jury gave it over to the judges, and the judges to the king. The king asked George's advice in this hard matter. Why, says George, I will give you my opinion in a minute; you must cause the tailor to stand in the street where the old gentleman was when he was killed by the tailor, and then let the old gentleman's son, the tailor's adversary, get up to the window from whence the tailor fell, and jump down and so kill the tailor as he did his father. The tailor's adversary hearing the sentence past, he would not venture to jump out the window, and so the tailor got clear off.

George went into the mint one day when they were melting gold. One of them asked George, if he would have his hat full of gold? George readily accorded, but it burned the bottom out of his hat, as they knew it would, and for the bout foiled George. However, George, to be up with them, bought a fine large hat, and caused a plate of copper to be put betwixt the hat and the lining; and returning next day, they jestingly asked him, if he would have another had full of gold? He said he would. They gave it red hot, and George now laughed at them in his turn; telling them, that his new hat was a good one, and stood fire better than the old one, and so carried it off honestly, and being afterwards prosecuted for to return it, he excused himself, telling the judge, that he took nothing but was given him, and therefore he was honourably acquitted, and the other heartily laughed at.

George being now far advanced in years, and being weary of the great fatigue and folly of the court fashions, a short time before his death, he

had a great desire to visit his native country, and the place of his nativity. Therefore he petitioned the king for permission to do so, which was granted. So he set out for Scotland, and went to the parish of Buchanan, in Dumbartonshire, where he visited all his relations and friends.—But George staying longer from court than the time allowed, the king sent him several messages to return, to which he returned no answer. At last the king sent him a letter, threatening that if he did not appear before him in the space of twenty days he would send his Lyon Heralds for him; to which George returned the following answer:—

My honoured liege and sovereign king,
Of your boasting great I dread nothing;
On your feud or favour I'll fairly venture,
Or that day I'll be where few kings enter.

And also gave him many good admonitions and directions concerning the government of his kingdom and the well-being of his soul; which drew tears from the king's eyes when he read it.

WILL SCOTT.

A celebrated attendant upon the Sheriff, well known for his activity in the execution of his orders, as well as for taking a bit comfortable guzzel when finances would afford it, was one Sabbath day snugly seated in the pew behind the Bailies at church. Will had not been there long till he was soon lull'd into sweet slumbers, and fancied himself seated along with his companions over a good imperial half-mutchkin, and in a short time the reckoning came a-paying, when some of the party insisted it was already paid;

however, Will happened not to be of that opinion, and true to his integrity, bawled out with all his might in the midst of the sermon, "No, no, by my faith its no pay't, we have had just a'e half mutchkin, an' twa bottles o' ale and there's no a fardin o't pay't."

GRAVE-DIGGER OF SORN.

The Grave digger of Sorn, Ayrshire, was as selfish and as mean a sinner as ever handled mattock, or carried mortcloth. He was a very quarrelsome and discontented old man, with a voice like the whistle of the wind through a key hole. On a bleak Sunday afternoon in the country, an acquaintance from a neighbouring parish accosted him and asked how the world was moving with him, "Oh, very puirly, sir, very puirly indeed," was the answer, "the yard has done naething ava for us this summer, if ye like to believe me, I havna buried a levin' soul this sax weeks."

HOW TO READ A SIGN-BOARD.

A Highland Drover passing through a certain town, noticed a sign-board above an entry, with the following inscription;

Green Teas, Raw Sugars, Marmalades, Jellies, Capped Biscuits, and all sorts of Confectionary Goods, sold down this entry.

He read it as follows:—

Green Trees, Raw Sodgers, Mermaids, Jades, Scabbed Bitches, and all sorts of Confusionary Goods, sold down this entry.